

IRAN'S POLICIES DURING WORLD WAR II

internal situation. The crucial difficulty in this connection -was the degree to which it was safe to protest abuses of power by the occupying states without incurring the odium of being anti-Ally.

Among the more positive tasks for the Iranian government stood the problem of economic adjustment to the war situation. In this field much again depended upon the good will of the Allies, and Iran, necessarily, was in the position of a petitioner. But towering above all these problems remained the supreme task of ensuring the prompt evacuation of the Allied armies and the return to full sovereignty at the end of the war. The Iranian government, indeed, was obliged to play the unwilling role of a tightrope walker without an appreciative audience.

To cope with this difficult situation Iran should have possessed certain qualities which, alas, she lacked. There was no strong government enjoying the confidence of the country. Discipline among the people was nonexistent. The loyalty and devotion of public servants was questionable. Due to her unfortunate involvement with Germany Iran could not avail herself of a strong moral argument in case of a dispute with foreign Powers. Finally, courage, necessary in every situation, was not conspicuous among Iranian statesmen and officials.

THE AFTERMATH OF DICTATORSHIP

There was an evident lack of strong leadership in the country after the deposition of Reza Shah. A prolonged period of dictatorship, no matter how beneficial, invariably leaves a country without prominent leaders. Those who appear on the scene after the passing of a dictator either lack idealism or, if idealistic, lack practical ex-

perience of independent government. This was the case of Iran after September, 1941. Furthermore, the new government was committed to democracy—a natural reaction against the former dictatorship. But democracy could not be implanted at once, and the war era, together with the occupation of the country by foreign Powers, was hardly a propitious period for the gradual introduction of a new, more liberal system of government. On the one hand, a number of political parties and newspapers sprang into existence. On the other, there were necessary restrictions on the freedom of press and